

The Fiddler on the Roof is one of my top two all-time favorite plays. With how fast the summer is passing, I am reminded of the song Sunrise Sunset and the following lyrics:

“Swiftly fly the years  
One season following another  
Laden with happiness and tears  
What words of wisdom can I give them?  
How can I help ease their way?”

Much has happened in our lives over the past year or so. During the pandemic, political upheaval, and social unrest some people have welcomed new babies into their families or celebrated weddings, anniversaries, and other happy occasions. Others of us are fighting physical diseases, mental ailments, or emotional infirmities. And, sadly, many people are grieving the death and departure of dear loved ones. Our individual and collective emotional, mental, and spiritual wellness is being taxed to the very limit.

While we face the possibility of emptying our reservoirs of fortitude to cope with many stressors, perhaps returning to our roots will provide a modicum of strength. As a small, rural agriculture-based community, it is part of our DNA to always be there for each other, especially when things go wrong. When the neighbor’s barn burns down, farmers leave their own chores undone and come from near and far to raise a new barn from the ashes. The famed Japanese farmer, Masanobu Fukuoka, said “The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings.”

Perhaps a new kind of service, or service of kindness, can grow that does not depend on being able to see the flames or smoke of travesty before helping. There are times when we all carry a wound or a worry that is not visible to others. It can be a lonely and dark world to unnecessarily wander alone, burdened by invisible difficulties.

There is a reason why we each have specially endowed gifts: to help serve others and thus benefit ourselves. It is true we each have innate talents or abilities which can be used to cheer the spirits of family, friends, loved ones, or even strangers thus lightening the load or providing a light to shine the way.

Like Tevya from Fiddler on the Roof, I offer a piece of wisdom (significant editorial privilege) to help ease your way. I invite you to try the following ideas to bless the life of someone else.

First, do something you like with someone you like. Spend time together with a loved one. Simply take the initiative to make it happen. If you act on the thoughts that come to mind, I bet you will make someone’s day.

Second, write a letter to someone you have not spoken with in a long time. Tell them how you are doing and ask for an update on their life. It does not take much more to include a thoughtful compliment or expression of gratitude. I promise it will do wonders for your friend.

Third, take a moment and write a positive online review of a local business. The more we flood the internet with positivity, the better. Helping our local economy makes a difference too.

Fourth, make a donation to a cause you care about in the name of someone you love. Do not worry about the dollar amount, just start with a few bucks. Share the news of your gift with the person you care about, why they are important to you, and how your cause matters. The return on your gift will match the genuine integrity of your intentions and, in some way I still cannot explain, exponentially increase the value of your donation.

Fifth, find a quiet place and spend some time thinking about the person who means the most to you. Focus on someone who is close to you and still with you. Try and think of the two or three most important reasons why they mean so much to you. Then find a way to look them in the eyes and tell them with all the sincerity of your soul why they matter to you.

Trust me...if you do one, ideally more, of the above suggestions you will feel the healing and renewing effects of empathy, gratitude, and love. And, at the same time, chances are you will help someone else who may very well need your light in a time of too much darkness.

Finally, if you are so inclined, I would appreciate your ideas on ways I can help other people too. If you have a favorite way to feel happy or help someone else be happy, please send me the suggestion and I will give it a try. ([email Jason Wood](#)) Perhaps we even co-author a future article about our shared experiences!

Og Mandino said, "I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness for it shows me the stars." Please choose to be a star during this time of darkness and help someone else be happy.